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Approved For Release 2004/07/08 : CIA-RDP79T00975A022800090002-8

Approved For Release 2004/07/08 : CIA-RDP79T00975A022800090002-8

25 September 1972

Central Intelligence Bulletin

CONTENTS

25X1

JAPAN-CHINA: Prime Minister Tanaka expects the Chinese to be flexible on most issues. (Page 5)

25X1

25X1

Approved For Release 2004/07/08 : CIA-RDP79T00975A022800090002-8

Next 4 Page(s) In Document Exempt

Approved For Release 2004/07/08 : CIA-RDP79T00975A022800090002-8

25X1

JAPAN-CHINA: Prime Minister Tanaka, who arrived in Peking today for five days of talks, expects the Chinese to be flexible on most issues.

Tokyo is quite prepared to meet the Chinese condition, made clear through a number of channels, that formal diplomatic relations with Nationalist China be severed.

25X1

If Peking presses for a clear Japanese statement regarding the status of Taiwan, Tanaka would almost certainly repeat the long-standing position that, having renounced all claims to Taiwan, the Japanese Government was not in a position to express a view on the future of the island.

Various Japanese who have recently talked with Chou En-lai received a clear impression that Tanaka would be able to avoid or finesse other contentious issues. Chou has let it be known that the Chinese would not bring up "third country" problems--presumably a reference to military ties with the US and Japan's relationship with South Korea.

Tanaka apparently wishes to omit from the joint communiqué a specific timetable for exchanging ambassadors, but, according to Tokyo's interpretation, relations would be established the moment the communiqué stating that Japan recognizes the PRC as the sole legitimate government of China is issued. Japan is likely to take the initiative to sever relations with Taipei promptly if the Nationalist Chinese do not make the move.

Tanaka clearly expects the visit to increase his popularity at home beyond even its present high level. Despite Tokyo's concern that Taipei's reaction in the economic and political spheres may not be as pragmatic as originally assumed, Taipei, after some posturing, probably will adopt a realistic assessment of the new situation.

25X1

25 Sep 72

Central Intelligence Bulletin

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25X1

Approved For Release 2004/07/08 : CIA-RDP79T00975A022800090002-8

Next 2 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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Approved For Release 2004/07/08 : CIA-RDP79T00975A022800090002-8

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